NSC BRIEFING   20 December 1955

FRENCH ELECTORAL SYSTEM

I.   The 1951 electoral law distributes seats under varying proportional representation formulas.

    A.   In the eight districts of the Paris area (Seine, Seine-et-Oise):

        1.   The total number of valid votes cast in a district is divided by the number of seats to be awarded.

        2.   Lists having more than this quotient are awarded seats in descending order.

        3.   In each case the quotient is then subtracted from the total, and this remainder used to determine the assignment of the next seat.

    B.   In the remaining 95 metropolitan districts, affiliated parties have their combined votes count as a unit.

        1.   A single party or an alliance wins all district seats if the total votes are over one-half of the total valid votes cast.

        2.   If no party or alliance wins a majority, the seats are then awarded on a proportional basis.

        3.   The first seat is won by the party or alliance with the highest total vote (technically, each seat is awarded to the party having the highest average

arrived at by dividing its total vote by one plus
the number of seats already assigned that party.)

4. Seats won by an alliance are divided among its
members parties in the same way.

EXAMPLE

150,000 total valid votes

5 seats

List A	50,000
B	45,000
C	30,000
D	16,000
E	9,000

Outside Paris area

List	A	1st seat	$\dfrac{50,000}{1}$	
	B	2nd	$\dfrac{45,000}{1}$	
	C	3rd	$\dfrac{30,000}{1}$	
	A	4th	$\dfrac{50,000}{2}$	25,000
	B	5th	$\dfrac{45,000}{2}$	22,500

Paris area

Quotient: $\dfrac{150,000}{5}$ 30,000

List	A	1st seat	(20,000 over)
	B	2nd	(15,000 over)
	C	3rd	(none over)
	A	4th	(largest remainder)
	D	5th	(next largest remainder)